

Summary of feedback: consultation on new rules for teacher refresh processes

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**Teaching
Council of
Aotearoa
New Zealand**

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What we consulted on

The Council sought feedback on proposed new rules for teacher refresh processes when renewing practising certificates, where a teacher is not able to meet the requirements for satisfactory recent teaching experience (SRT). The rules are required to be made under the Education and Training Act 2020 (ETA) Part 5, section 486(1)(h).

The consultation also asked for feedback on the policy changes needed for the proposed new rules, and policy changes for other circumstances where teacher refresh processes may be required.

We proposed that the rules would largely reflect existing policy and practice, building on current teacher refresh processes, rather than introducing a whole new process. To this end, the draft rules included a new type of practice plan to be added to our current teacher refresh processes - for new or beginning teachers.

The consultation document also set out the policy changes that would be needed for the rules and other changes, including:

- Clarification on wording for consistency with the ETA
- Wording for the provisions relating to the rules for teacher refresh processes
- A change to the criteria for issuing a Returning to Teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand (RTTANZ) practising certificate

The intended outcome of the proposals was to ensure that the new rules and policy changes provide a clear pathway for renewal for any teacher not able to meet satisfactory recent teaching requirements, regardless of what stage they are at in their teaching career.

The consultation document asked respondents to consider the following:

1. A proposal to introduce a new/beginning teacher practice plan for teachers seeking to renew a Tōmua | Provisional practising certificate who are unable to meet SRT requirements
2. The proposal that unless an exemption is obtained, a TER programme will be required when a teacher has spent time teaching overseas but the role was not equivalent to a teaching position in an educational institution in New Zealand
3. The proposal to only issue the RTTANZ practising certificates in specific limited circumstances
4. Any other comments/feedback on what the Teaching Council should consider before making decisions on the proposed new rules and policy changes
5. Any other comments on the proposed changes overall, or any other related matter

Overall response to the proposals

The nature of the feedback received (a mix of supporting the proposals and raising issues or concerns) does not lead us to think that significant changes need to be made to the proposed rules for teacher refresh processes.

However the responses have highlighted that we need to strengthen our communication in a number of areas, including:

- When and how we apply discretion for issue and renewal of practising certificates, particularly for teachers working outside of early childhood services, schools or kura
- How SRT requirements can be met, including when overseas teaching experience can be considered, and how relieving teachers and teachers working outside of early childhood services, schools or kura meet this requirement
- When the rules are gazetted, what would be an addition to the refresh processes, and what is currently in place
- How practice plans work, including while a teacher is still seeking employment, and when they have obtained a teaching position

We have responded to these issues in this feedback document, however we will also provide updated information via the Council's website once the rules for teacher refresh process are gazetted.

The feedback also highlighted a number of policy and operational issues which we will work through over the coming weeks, and that will be communicated to teachers once policy decisions are finalised.

Who participated in the consultation?

The Council received 123 responses to the consultation. Of these, 115 were individual responses, and eight were submissions from peak bodies or other stakeholder groups.

Of the individual responses 67 responded to the consultation document's questions. The remaining 36 raised other issues relating to separate areas of the Council's work, which sat outside the parameters of this consultation.

Of those who responded to the consultation questions, two respondents did not support the proposals - one of these was an individual respondent who did not support any of the proposals and the second related to a specific concern from a peak body about proposed clause 66E of the rules. The concern relating to the rules was subsequently followed up and clarified with the submitter, who indicated this resolved it.

Themes identified from responses to the consultation

Concerns about additional refresh requirements and associated workload

A number of respondents raised concerns about whether specific teacher groups would now have to do a refresh process to renew, which would mean practising certificate renewals would be more onerous.

This is not the intention of the refresh processes for renewing practising certificates, and most teachers will continue to renew their practising certificate in the usual way. As we noted in the consultation document, to a large extent these processes are already in place; the main proposal is to add an option for new/beginning teachers to also use a practice plan for renewing.

We have not received feedback from teachers who have used the current Return to Practice Plan option that would indicate that it is a particularly onerous process. However we may consider seeking feedback from teachers once the new refresh processes have been in place for a time, so that we can more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the expanded approach.

How teachers can meet requirements for satisfactory recent teaching

A number of respondents were concerned that the changes outlined in the consultation document meant that there would be an increased requirement to complete teacher refresh processes when a teacher was unable to meet SRT requirements.

These respondents were unsure how the SRT requirement can be met when a teacher is not employed in an early childhood, primary or secondary setting in a full or part-time teaching role, and that therefore this would mean the teacher needed to complete a refresh process to renew their practising certificate.

Satisfactory recent teaching experience is defined as two years uninterrupted teaching in the past five years or a shorter period approved by the Council. This means the Council can (and does) apply discretion to applications where teaching experience does not fit these parameters.

The Council also has discretion to consider teaching experience in settings that are equivalent to a New Zealand educational institution.¹ This means we can consider and approve renewals in a range of other organisations other than these settings, where the applicant is able to meet the other requirements for practising certificate renewal. The provision in the ETA also permits the Council to consider overseas teaching experience when approving practising certificate renewals.

To illustrate how the SRT requirement can be met for different roles and in different situations across the sector, below is a summary of the questions we received and how they may be addressed. We will also provide these examples in FAQs, as part of the work to strengthen our communications in this area.

Differentiating between no teaching experience and some teaching experience: Some respondents commented that there needed to be greater clarity about how refresh processes would apply for teachers seeking to renew with no SRT or those with some SRT.

An example provided was that a teacher with no teaching experience in the last five years could end up with a Tūturu | Full (Category One) certificate, but another teacher with some experience may only be eligible for a Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate.

¹ Education and Training Act 2020 Schedule 3, Part 10(9)(b)

The legislation requires the Council to renew a practising certificate if the teacher either meets the satisfactory recent teaching requirement or undertakes a refresh process. This means that the refresh process acts as a proxy for the SRT requirement and so the renewal is for the same type of practising certificate.

Therefore, in these circumstances, once the teacher had gained employment, they would discuss their PLD and other support needs with their professional leader, as part of the Professional Growth Cycle (PGC). Further PLD or support needs may be identified because the teacher has no or limited satisfactory recent teaching experience and would be incorporated into their PGC priorities.

Note that the Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate is held by a teacher when their role type means they may not be able to show using and meeting all the Standards | Ngā Paerewa but are considered likely to meet them because of their previous experience. For example, they may be in a day-to-day relieving role or working outside of an early childhood, primary or secondary setting.

Relieving teachers: Several respondents were concerned about how teachers who are employed in relieving roles can meet SRT requirements. These respondents thought it would be unfair to expect relievers to undertake a teacher refresh process simply because their employment was not a typical permanent full or part-time role.

Renewal applications for relieving teachers who may not be able to meet the SRT requirement can be processed using the Council's discretion to approve shorter periods of teaching. This means that these teachers can usually renew their practising certificate without needing to undertake a teacher refresh process, even if they have undertaken many different relieving roles with multiple employers. If a teacher holding a Tōmua | Provisional practising certificate is seeking to renew beyond five years, they would first need to complete a TER programme.

Teachers taking parental leave: Respondents were unclear about whether teachers taking parental leave would always be required to undertake a teacher refresh process when they resumed teaching (whether full or part-time).

Parental leave counts as service if the teacher has remained employed and is paid by the employer (or through paid parental leave payments or a combination of these). In many cases, the teacher will be able to satisfy SRT, but also needs to meet the other requirements for renewal (including professional development in the past three years and progress in te reo/tikanga competency).

When the teacher can't meet SRT requirements (even after the Council has considered a shorter period), the kind of refresh process they may need to undertake would depend on the practising certificate type that they hold:

Provisional practising certificate: Under the proposals in the consultation document, if the teacher wanted to renew their Tōmua | Provisional practising certificate and it was less than five years since they were first issued with this practising certificate type, they would be able to renew using the new/beginning teacher practice plan refresh option. This would be a new provision in the refresh processes. After five or more years renewing this practising certificate type, they would need to complete a Teacher Education Refresh (TER) programme - this is currently included in policy and will remain after updates are made for the new rules.

Full practising certificate: Under the proposals in the consultation document, an experienced teacher seeking to renew a Tūturu | Full (Category One) or Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate, who couldn't meet the satisfactory recent teaching requirements, would be required to complete a Return to Practice Plan (RTPP). If the teacher continued to renew using a RTPP after the five-year period, they may be required to complete a TER programme. Both these processes are currently included in policy and will remain after updates are made for the new rules.

Teachers who have been teaching overseas: Some respondents commented that it was too difficult for teachers returning from working overseas to renew their practising certificate when they don't have SRT in New Zealand.

Changes to the ETA mean that the Council can consider overseas teaching experience for renewal of practising certificates, if the role/s was equivalent to a teaching position in an educational institution in New Zealand.² The Council is also able to consider overseas teaching service when reviewing applications where the teacher may otherwise be required to complete a Teacher Education Refresh programme. Additionally, overseas teaching experience is considered when an overseas-trained teacher is seeking New Zealand registration.

To be considered for SRT experience, overseas teaching needs to have taken place in a setting equivalent to an educational institution in New Zealand. This includes early childhood services, schools and tertiary education institutions, but doesn't include one-on-one tutoring or home-based learning.

We will be providing more information about the criteria for consideration of overseas teaching experience for renewal of practising certificates soon, including the policy changes required to accommodate these changes.

Teachers working in learning support and other roles within ECE, primary or secondary settings: Some respondents were concerned that teachers who are working in a range of learning support roles within early childhood, primary or secondary settings would be required to complete a refresh process to renew their practising certificate, because they would not be able to meet the SRT requirement.

Teachers in support roles who work with individual students and/or provide professional learning/support/advice to colleagues are likely to be able to renew their practising certificate without needing to complete a teacher refresh process, provided they meet the requirements for renewal for that practising certificate type.

Teachers working in New Zealand in organisations other than early childhood, schools or kura: Several respondents commented that it was unclear how a teacher who was not working in an early childhood, primary or secondary setting would be able to meet SRT requirements to renew their practising certificate without being required to complete a teacher refresh process. This included teachers working in tertiary settings (public and private) and those working in roles within the Ministry of Education.

The ETA provides the Council with discretion to consider teaching experience where the teacher is working in roles outside of early childhood, primary and secondary settings. Because we are required to apply discretion individually, each application is considered on a case-by-case basis, within the parameters of the registration and certification policy.

Key considerations include whether the teacher is able to demonstrate using and meeting the standards or paerewa in their role (endorsed by the equivalent of a professional leader, or approved by the Council if not available), and that the teacher meets the other requirements for renewal of a practising certificate.

This means that teachers who are no longer working in what would be regarded as a typical teaching role (centre or classroom-based) can seek to renew their practising certificate if they choose. A registration officer would assess whether SRT can be met or advise whether a refresh process would be needed.

Teachers who continue to renew a Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate (previously Subject to Confirmation): Some respondents were concerned that teachers who currently hold a Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate and have renewed this practising certificate type for more than five years would be required to undertake a teacher refresh process.

Teachers can renew a Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate indefinitely without needing a refresh process, as long as they meet the requirements for renewal of this practising certificate type. Day-to-day relief teachers often hold this practising certificate type, because the nature of their role may mean they are not able to be endorsed as meeting all the standards or paerewa. In these instances, because they are an experienced teacher, a professional leader may endorse them as likely to meet the standards or paerewa (which means a Pūmau | Full (Category Two) practising certificate is issued or renewed).

² Education and Training Act 2020 Schedule 3, Part 10(9)(b)

Why do we want teachers renewing practising certificates without satisfactory recent teaching experience?

Some respondents asked whether we should be renewing practising certificates for teachers with little or no satisfactory recent teaching experience. The majority of teachers will renew their practising certificate being able to meet satisfactory recent teaching requirements. However for a range of reasons, many teachers have periods of time in their career where they may have less or no recent teaching. We believe that it is important to have a refresh process that will allow these teachers to renew their practising certificate, keep current in their teaching knowledge and practice, and be ready to take up a teaching position.

On returning to a centre or classroom, they will consolidate their practice and discuss development priorities with their professional leader, as part of the normal activities associated with the Professional Growth Cycle. They may receive other support through induction and mentoring or mentoring, depending on their practising certificate type.

How to support new/beginning teachers who can't meet satisfactory recent teaching requirements

Most submitters responding to the proposal for a new/beginning teacher practice plan were supportive of this approach. Respondents commented that it was good to have another option for new/beginning teachers, in the same way that this option has been available to experienced teachers. Respondents also noted that because these teachers were at the start of their teaching journey, completing a self-assessment of learning needs and intended professional development would be a good way to show how they plan to remain current in their professional skills and knowledge.

Several respondents commented on specific aspects of the New/Beginning Teacher Practice Plan which they thought needed additional consideration. These are noted below, with our initial thinking on how these could be addressed.

How the relative status of a graduating student teacher assessed as able to meet the standards (with support), is to be differentiated from a provisional teacher undertaking a proposed beginning teacher practice plan. The graduating student teacher's assessment includes evidence of professional practice capability near to graduation, whereas the provisional teacher may not have been teaching at all recently.

A professional leader seeking to employ a Tōmua | Provisional teacher who has renewed using a New/Beginning Teacher Practice Plan would note limited teaching service in their employment history. This would assist with establishing what the focus for induction and mentoring for that teacher might be, that may be different from a new graduate.

What provisions for a sustained practice observation of the provisional teacher would be made, by whom, and how would the assessment be moderated?

The purpose of the practice plan is to maintain currency in professional skills and knowledge and provide the teacher with a pathway for renewal. Observations of practice would occur once the teacher gained employment (unless they continued to renew using the New/Beginning Teacher Practice Plan beyond five years). As in the example above, the level of support the teacher needed would form part of professional conversations between them and their professional leader and mentor.

What provision for professional advice and guidance will be available to Tōmua | Provisional teachers who are not teaching when they develop a practice plan to ensure they will meet the standards with support on their eventual move to practice?

The Council is looking to provide additional resources focused on Tōmua | Provisional teacher needs e.g. webinars, resource links, information on links to professional networks etc. However, as with the other examples above, much of the more focused guidance would be provided in the induction and mentoring programme, once the teacher had gained employment.

How would the Council deal with Tōmua | Provisional teachers staying in a cycle of refresh processes and never getting Tūturu | Full (Category One)?

From time to time the Council encounters application renewals where the teacher has been unable to meet the requirements for moving to Tūturu | Full (Category One). In these cases, the teacher is advised that they may be required to undertake a TER programme once it has been five or more years since they were first issued with a Tōmua | Provisional practising certificate.

The [Endorser Guidelines](#) also outline some of the ways professional leaders can support Tōmua | Provisional teachers to complete induction and mentoring and the other requirements to move to a Tūturu | Full (Category One) practising certificate.

More clarity is needed for what would be required in a New/Beginning Teacher Practice Plan.

Once decisions have been made about the teacher refresh processes, the Council will provide more information about the new practice plans – including a template and other resources to assist with completing these. The practice plan will be focused on using and meeting the Standards | Ngā Paerewa (with support), as well as maintaining currency in developments in teaching and learning.

Whether refresh processes should be required for experienced teachers

Some respondents commented on whether experienced teachers who are fully certificated should have to undertake a teacher refresh process when they can't meet SRT requirements. Their view was that these teachers have already demonstrated that they meet or are likely to meet the standards or paerewa for previous renewals. Others held the view that the more structured Teacher Education Refresh (TER) programme should only be required for teachers who were trained overseas, and that a Return to Practice Plan (RTPP) is sufficient for New Zealand trained teachers.

Legislation requires that teachers must show satisfactory recent teaching experience for every practising certificate renewal. Where they can't meet this requirement, the legislation also provides the option for a refresh process as a proxy for SRT, as determined by the Council in rules. The RTPP approach recognises that experienced teachers will be able to draw on skills and knowledge attained throughout their teaching career, but provides an opportunity for these teachers to identify any additional learning needs they may have.

RTPP are designed as a self-assessment tool for teachers focused on using and meeting the *Standards | Ngā Paerewa*, allowing them to individually tailor any learning or development needs, rather than being a structured programme.

Experienced teachers may have to undertake a TER if they can't meet SRT requirements after more than five years of renewing using a RTPP – when a TER may be required would be individually assessed for each applicant, to reflect their individual circumstances.

Several respondents noted that teacher refresh processes needed to be easy and clear, meeting teacher learning needs – otherwise this could act as a barrier to teachers returning to teaching.

The Council is mindful of the need to balance having assurances about a teacher's readiness to resume teaching and that the processes to enable this are user-friendly. This is why we have proposed an approach where most teachers who can't meet SRT requirements will be able to renew using one of the two practice plans. We recognise that a TER programme requires considerably more commitment and time for a teacher, and so have proposed continuing to limit its use to specific and defined circumstances.

Some respondents commented that allowing teachers who have not completed any teaching in the last five years to complete a self-assessment of their learning needs and identify PLD, is not adequate and that a RTPP should have a greater level of monitoring – one suggestion was by another registered teacher.

The guidance for completing a RTPP provides information for teachers about the areas that their practice plan could cover (this will also be provided in the New/Beginning Teacher Practice Plan). The teacher does their own assessment of what their priorities will be, recognising that as an experienced teacher, they will have good insight into what their learning and development needs may be. On attaining employment, the teacher would discuss their learning and development priorities with their professional leader, as part of the Professional Growth Cycle, and adapt/amend these as appropriate for the setting.

Teacher Education Refresh programmes

Concerns about the impact of removing funding of TER programmes were raised by a number of respondents, with several noting that if teachers were individually responsible for payment, this would be very likely to be a disincentive to enrolling, and may impact on whether teachers choose to return to teaching.

The Ministry of Education has committed to funding the programme fees for teachers required to undertake TER until the end of June 2022, in line with the government funding appropriation.

There is no indication at this time about whether the Government will make additional funding available for TER programme fees beyond the end of June 2022.

The Council will continue to advocate for government funding of the programme, as we recognise the fees may be a significant barrier for teachers deciding whether to return to their teaching career.

TER programmes are currently more focused on new/beginning teachers, and more differentiation between these teachers, overseas-trained teachers, and experienced New Zealand-trained teachers is needed. For example, consideration of a shorter period for a programme undertaken by an experienced teacher.

The Council has current contracts in place with several TER programme providers. When these contracts conclude, we can evaluate whether programme structure should be revised for new contracts.

Teachers trained in New Zealand shouldn't have to do TER – it should be limited to teachers trained overseas because the New Zealand teaching environment is markedly different from many overseas.

All teachers need to be able to meet SRT requirements or complete a refresh process to renew their practising certificate. Our education system does not differentiate between different jurisdictions for applications for teacher registration, other than to ensure that the teacher is satisfactorily trained to teach and that they meet all the other requirements for registration and issuing of a practising certificate. Overseas-trained teachers are also supported to adapt to our teaching context through the induction and mentoring they receive whilst holding a Tōmua | Provisional practising certificate.

There needs to be more clarity about what the TER exemption processes are and the criteria for exemption.

The criteria we apply when considering whether to grant a TER exemption are available on [our website](#) and in the registration and certification policy. However we will look at how the website information could be updated to provide more details about the criteria and process for exemptions.

Other issues or comments

How does a teacher refresh or update if they move sectors?

Registration and practising certificates are not sector-specific, although the Ministry of Education requires specific ECE qualifications for teachers in the ECE sector, to meet their funding and regulatory requirements. If a teacher chooses to move sectors, any professional learning and development to update skills and knowledge for that sector would be their responsibility. Ongoing professional learning and development priorities would form part of the activities associated with the setting's Professional Growth Cycle.

A proposal that meeting the standards should have more weight than whether the teacher has held a .5 role for induction and mentoring (i.e. less focus on the hours taught). This would (for example) support teachers working in less populated areas where teaching positions over .5 may be less available.

This proposal sits outside of the parameters of the current consultation, but has been noted. Our registration and certification policy has moved more towards an assessment by professional leaders about whether the teacher meets the standards or *paerewa* as required for their practising certificate type, and so is less focused on time-bound rules. The exception to this is during the induction and mentoring period because we know how important it is for beginning teachers to get experience in a supported setting. The policy also allows us to apply some discretion in individual cases.

That practising certificate duration should vary, depending on the type of practising certificate (i.e. longer duration for Tūturu | Full (Category One) and Pūmau | Full (Category Two) and a shorter period for Tōmua | Provisional).

This proposal sits outside of the parameters of the current consultation, but has been noted for future policy reviews.

That legislative changes should be considered for some of the terminology currently used in the ETA: the description of satisfactory recent teaching; equivalency to a teaching position in New Zealand; teacher refresh processes; and exemption processes for Teacher Education Refresh programmes.

This consultation is specifically focused on the new rules that we need to gazette for teacher refresh processes, however these issues have been noted for consideration in policy development and/or future legislative changes. Any proposals for changes to legislation would be led by the Ministry of Education, with advice from the Council.



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